



Illinois Department of Natural Resources

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Visitors to Starved Rock Should Watch for Crowd Updates on Social Media over Holiday Weekend

Park Received 94,000 Visitors during Memorial Day Weekend

UTICA, IL – Travelers planning a trip to Starved Rock State Park near Utica over the Fourth of July weekend are asked to stay informed on park crowds by monitoring Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Facebook and Twitter feeds. During the Memorial Day weekend, the park received 94,000 visitors, pushing the park to capacity and causing a temporary closure when parking lots overflowed.

For regular updates, visit the IDNR Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Illinois-Department-of-Natural-Resources-101691346567146/> or Twitter feed: <https://twitter.com/IllinoisDNR> or follow @IllinoisDNR.

“We want the public to enjoy their experience at the park, while following the rules,” said Rafael Gutierrez, Chief of the IDNR Office of Law Enforcement. “Illinois Conservation Police Officers will be patrolling the park, and will issue tickets to anyone violating park rules. We also ask hikers not to litter, and to pack out everything they bring into the park.”

“Starved Rock is not only a gem for our district, but for the state and the Midwest,” said State Sen. Sue Rezin (R-Peru), whose district includes Starved Rock. “It’s important we keep it that way through cleanliness, conservation, and responsible behavior to ensure public safety. July 4 weekend is always a busy weekend. I encourage visitors to please take it easy, be respectful of each other and the site itself, and be prepared for crowds. If you are thinking about visiting Starved Rock July 4 weekend, I would encourage you to check out IDNR’s Facebook and Twitter pages as they will provide real time updates of attendance, parking, and weather.”

Conservation Police will strictly enforce the following safety rules:

- Possession of alcohol on trails
- Entering restricted areas
- Hiking off trails
- Climbing rock walls and cliffs

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- No Swimming
- Defacing sandstone walls with paint or etchings
- Littering
- Being on trails after dark

St. Peter Sandstone in Starved Rock can crumble and be slippery when wet. Every year, several park visitors are severely injured in falls. Conservation Police ask hikers to please stay on trails.

If the park reaches maximum capacity (meaning no parking spaces remain), the park may be closed for safety reasons until parking becomes available. People are reminded not to park along park roads or public highways. This may prevent emergency vehicles from getting through. Vehicles parked illegally will be towed at the owner's expense.

Lodge and wedding guests, as well as people with brunch reservations, will be allowed to enter the park. Lodge parking will be restricted to lodge patrons with reservations.

Visitors arriving from the east on Interstate 80 should consider taking an alternate route to the park. Travelers can exit prior to Utica at Ottawa, cross the Illinois River and approach the park from the east on Illinois 71. Motorists also can exit southbound on Interstate 39 and take the Illinois 71 exit at Oglesby. Visitors should have alternate plans in the event that the park has been closed temporarily when they arrive. For more information about Illinois State Parks in your area, visit: <http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/parks/Pages/default.aspx>.

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